

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF  
VETERANS AFFAIRS  
(July 19, 2007)**

**STRATEGIC PLAN  
2007 – 2011**

**“HONORING CALIFORNIA’S VETERANS”**

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## Secretary's Introduction

Dear Citizens:

The Mission of the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA) is "To Serve California's veterans and their families." This Strategic Plan is our guide for the next five years in support of our mission. In drafting this plan, the CDVA Team was guided by the knowledge that organizations that plan for the future will successfully address their organizational requirements and the needs and desires that impact the quality of life of their customers, stakeholders and partners.

Our focus is direct and to the point: How will CDVA meet and exceed the expectations of California's veterans and their families? We are guided too by the spirit of General Omar Bradley, who stated during his tenure as the Secretary of the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs: "We are dealing with veterans, not procedures. With their problems, not ours."

The Department's Strategic Plan for 2007 – 2011 reflects Governor Schwarzenegger's vision for California's future and his great respect and appreciation for what our veterans have done for the nation. Our plan is also aligned with the vision of the California Veterans Board: "To be recognized as one of the prime advocates for California veterans' rights and benefits."

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, California has maintained an historic commitment to caring for veterans and their families. We are proud of our service to California's veterans' community, and through the adoption of this strategic plan, we reaffirm that commitment.

Sincerely,

Thomas Johnson  
Secretary  
California Department of Veterans Affairs

# Executive Summary

California Department of Veterans Affairs  
Strategic Plan  
2007 – 2011

“Honoring California’s Veterans”

There are currently more than 2.2 million veterans living in California. In support of California’s veterans and their families, the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) expends \$6 billion in benefits and services. The California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA) total budget in the current fiscal year is approximately \$323 million, of which \$87 million is General Fund.

This Strategic Plan will guide the California Department of Veterans Affairs for the next five years. Throughout the planning process, and in the drafting of this plan, the CDVA Team was guided by the knowledge that organizations that plan for the future will successfully address their organizational requirements and the needs and desires that impact the quality of life of their customers, stakeholders and partners. In developing this plan we focused and addressed the following questions:

- How will CDVA meet and exceed the expectations of California’s veterans and their families today and in the future?
- How will CDVA address the challenges of meeting the needs of an aging veteran population, and those of newer veterans?
- How will CDVA measure and report organizational performance?
- How will CDVA translate organizational performance results into priorities for continuous service-delivery improvement and into opportunities for innovation?

This updated plan is aligned with Governor Schwarzenegger’s vision for California’s future and his great respect and appreciation for what our veterans have done for the nation, and is also aligned with the California Veterans Board’s vision: “To be recognized as one of the prime advocates for California veterans’ rights and benefits.”

**Our Mission:** To serve California’s veterans and their families

**Our Vision:** California’s veterans will live the highest quality of life with dignity and honor

**Our Core Values:**

- Respect for All
- Absolute Integrity
- Outstanding Service
- Commitment to Excellence
- A “Can Do” Spirit

We will accomplish our mission by:

- Providing in our Veterans Homes a Continuum of health & residential care
- Administering the Cal-Vet Farm & Home Loan Program
- Providing federal Veterans Affairs claim representation & assistance
- Supporting County Veterans Service Offices direct services to veterans and dependents
- Operating the Northern California Veterans Cemetery
- Advocating for Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises (DVBE)
- Supporting statewide veteran outreach
- Coordinating California veteran benefit programs
- Supporting state-owned veteran memorial programs
- Working closely with our partners and stakeholders

Five strategic CDVA goals cover multiple objectives related to the successful delivery of programs and services to California's veterans and their families:

- Goal 1: We will provide high quality advocacy and services for all California Veterans.
- Goal 2: We will provide the best long-term care and enhanced quality of life for all State Veterans Homes residents.
- Goal 3: We will attract, develop and retain qualified and caring CDVA staff and volunteers.
- Goal 4: We will maintain effective communication with all staff and stakeholders.
- Goal 5: We will use our resources wisely.

Detailed Program and Service Delivery Action Plans and Performance Measures will be developed, tracked and reported by CDVA Division Strategic Plans. Quarterly, the Department will review and analyze progress toward meeting our goals and objectives, and a Performance Measure Report will be published annually.

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# California Department of Veterans Affairs Strategic Plan 2007 – 2011

## “Honoring California’s Veterans”

### **Mission:**

To serve California’s veterans and their families

### **Vision:**

California’s veterans will live the highest quality of life with dignity and honor

### **Core Values:**

- Respect for All
- Absolute Integrity
- Outstanding Service
- Commitment to Excellence
- A “Can Do” Spirit

### **CDVA accomplishes its mission by:**

- Providing in our Veterans Homes a Continuum of Health & Residential Care
- Administering the Cal-Vet Farm & Home Loan Program
- Providing federal Veterans Affairs claim representation & assistance
- Supporting County Veterans Service Offices direct services to veterans and dependents
- Operating Northern California Veterans Cemetery
- Advocating for Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) program
- Supporting statewide veteran outreach
- Coordinating California veteran benefit programs
- Supporting state-owned veteran memorial programs
- Working closely with our partners and stakeholders

### **Partner & Stakeholder Relationships:**

Our relationship with our partners and stakeholders is a very important factor in determining our mission success. Our commitment to provide high quality advocacy and services for all of California’s 2.2 million veterans and their families is greatly enhanced when we collaborate with our partners and stakeholders, and leverage the enormous talent and capabilities that each group possesses. Through this strategic plan we rededicate ourselves to continually improve and strengthen our relationship with the following federal, state and local partners and stakeholders:

**U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA):** Our partnership with the USDVA, specifically our day-to-day working relationships with the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and the Veterans Integrated Services Network (VISN) of VA healthcare facilities throughout California, the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), and the National Cemetery Administration (NCA), is vitally important to our success. There are several key components to this partnership: We rely on USDVA's federal funds to build, maintain and operate our veterans homes; we collaborate with the VISN healthcare facilities that provide world-class healthcare to California's eligible veterans; we work closely with the VBA in the compensation and pension determination process to ensure our veterans are professionally represented; we have co-located our Veterans Services Field Offices with the VBA's Regional Offices in Oakland, Los Angeles and San Diego to enhance our ability to impact that process; and we rely on the NCA's resources to build and operate our state-owned and operated cemetery.

The importance of our partnership with the USDVA is illuminated by the fact that our federal partners recently provided a quitclaim deed to the state for nearly 14 acres of land on its West Los Angeles VA campus so that California can build a 396-bed veterans home on the site. Known as the Greater Los Angeles Ventura Counties (GLAVC) project, it represents a historic and unique partnership between CDVA, VISN 22 and VISN 22's Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System (GLAHS) leadership team. The partnership involves establishing sharing agreements for medical, pharmacy, nutrition and other key services with the GLAHS team. The GLAVC project also includes constructing two satellite facilities with sixty beds each in Lancaster and Ventura. These residents will also benefit from these sharing agreements.

Once the GLAVC project receives final approval from the USDVA and the State, two additional veterans homes will be built in Fresno and Redding within the timeframe prescribed in this strategic plan. During this process we will actively seek out partnering opportunities with our USDVA colleagues in those areas of the state.

**California Veterans Board:** The California Veterans Board serves as an advocate for veterans, and works to ensure that their rights and benefits are protected. We actively support, are involved with, and attend all Board meetings. We also continually keep the Board informed of our programs, progress and issues. The Board determines policy for Department operations, including significant changes affecting on-going programs, proposed programs, and long-range planning. In the development of the Department's strategic plan we were guided by, and aligned our goals and objectives with, the Board's vision – "To be recognized as one of the prime advocates for California's veterans' rights and benefits."

**County Veterans Service Offices (CVSO):** The Department values its partnership with the County Veterans Service Offices - a relationship that ensures veterans and their families are served and represented by trained and accredited professionals. CVSO's are an integral component in the State's efforts to interface with individual veterans and their families. They are on the front lines for this important mission and play the key role in ensuring that veterans and their families are aware of their benefits, and in fact apply for and receive them. Together, the CVSO's, through claims initiation and development, and the Department, through claims development and representation, provide assistance to veterans and their families in preparing and submitting claims and in representing claimants before the federal, state and local agencies providing veterans benefits. In FY

2005-2006, the CVSO's obtained \$177.6 million in new federal benefits for California's veterans and their families.

**Veterans Services Organizations:** To successfully meet the needs of California's veterans and their families, and to meet the special needs of returning combat veterans, the Department will continue to strengthen and enhance its working relationship with our state's Veterans Services Organizations. The Department cannot place a monetary value on the advocacy, services and support these partners and stakeholders provide to our veterans community. We recognize that they are a valuable resource, and a strong voice in the halls of Congress and the Legislature to ensure veterans benefits are maintained and enhanced when warranted.

## **CDVA Profile and History:**

The California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA) has an annual operating budget of approximately \$323 million, a Farm and Home Loan program with assets of about \$2.4 billion, and 1706 employees statewide. The Department provides outreach to veterans reentering civilian life after having answered America's call to military service, by helping them claim their earned veterans benefits, provides low-cost loans to acquire homes and farms, and when the time comes, provides aged and disabled veterans rehabilitative, residential, and medical care and service in home-like environments at the California Veterans Homes.

This past year, CDVA celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a department. Moreover, California's history of taking care of its veterans reaches back to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

### **19<sup>th</sup> Century - The California Militia and Veterans of the Mexican & Civil Wars:**

The story begins with the founding of the California Militia in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

The Veterans Homes of California trace their origin to the Grand Army of the Republic, an organization of Union veterans formed shortly after the Civil War, and Veterans of the Mexican War. On December 4, 1877, a motion was made to create "a Veterans Home of California." On April 12, 1881, the Veterans Home Association was incorporated with 11 members. The Association eventually purchased 910 acres of farmland at Yountville in the Napa Valley on October 25, 1882, with \$17, 750 in donated funds. The Veterans Home of California was officially open on April 1, 1884. The State of California accepted from the Association the property and buildings of the Veterans Home, and provided for the maintenance and governance of the institution.

### **World War I - Additional Services for a New Veteran Population:**

The distribution of a cash bonus to returning veterans was the standard state response to military service in 1920. California had a better idea, and enacted "Soldier Legislation" to assist returning veterans. The legislation provided for:

- Civil Service Preferences to Veterans
- Educational Opportunities for Veterans and their Dependents

- Exemptions from various State Taxes and Fees
- Counties to Erect Homes, Buildings, Memorials or Meeting Places for Veterans
- Establishment of the Armistice Day Holiday; and
- State Aid to Veterans in the Purchase of Farms, Homes, and Home-sites.

## **1929 – The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs:**

The State recognized that the various boards and programs providing services for veterans were beginning to duplicate efforts. The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs was created in 1929. The law provided for four divisions:

- Division of Military Affairs
- Division of Veterans Welfare
- Division of Veterans Homes
- Division of Athletics (to be administered by the California Athletic Commission – established to oversee professional and club boxing and wrestling in 1924)

The organizational structure of 1929 served until the security threats apparent after December 7, 1941, and the needs of returning World War II veterans overwhelmed the ability of the divisions to respond.

## **World War II – California Responds to War:**

In 1941, California established the California State Guard, and many citizens, including a large number of veterans, became the nucleus of the regiments that were formed. With the declaration of war, the Veterans Welfare Board began making plans for peace, recognizing the need for legislative action to meet the needs of veterans returning from the two theaters of WWII.

To provide a State clearing and coordinating agency for the veterans programs, the California Veterans Committee was appointed in October 1944. Its purpose was to aid in the development of a workable program for returning veterans, and to coordinate activities with federal, state, local and non-government agencies.

## **1946 – Creation of the Department of Veterans Affairs:**

In 1946, California created the Department of Veterans Affairs and California Veterans Board as replacements for the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, and the Veterans Welfare Board. The California Veterans Board was authorized to determine policies and establish rules and regulations for the administration of the department of four divisions:

- Division of Farm and Home Purchases
- Division of Educational Assistance
- Division of Service and Coordination
- Division of Veterans Homes



## **CDVA Today – Critical Issues & Challenges:**

These are the critical issues and challenges facing the Department today:

- (1) Building Five New Veterans Homes:** The Department is in the process of building five new veterans homes. The largest home complex is the Greater Los Angeles and Ventura County (GLAVC) project that includes a 396-bed facility in West Los Angeles on the campus of the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center; a 60-bed satellite project in Ventura and a 60-bed satellite facility in Lancaster. The Lancaster and Ventura satellites will also support Adult Day Health Care Programs for 50 veterans at each site. The project completion dates are December 2008 for Lancaster and Ventura, and December 2009 for the West Los Angeles facility. The two remaining homes will be built in Redding and Fresno, and are projected to be completed by 2010. California is at the top of the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) list of underserved states when it comes to state veterans' homes.
- (2) State Home Grant Program Funding:** The Department will continue advocating for increased federal funding of the State Veterans Home Grant Program, which pays for the construction of new state veterans homes and repairs on existing homes. Based upon the current nationwide demand for projects and repairs to existing homes, the current funding is woefully low and needs to be increased. If it is not increased, the Federal grant funding for the Redding and Fresno Homes could cause unacceptable delays in the building of these two facilities.
- (3) Completing the Five-Year Plan for Barstow:** The Department made a commitment to the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs that it would bring the Barstow facility up to capacity within five years, by providing several levels of care for the residents up to and including Skilled Nursing Care. Failure to meet that commitment could result in the federal government demanding repayment of the \$17 million used to build the Barstow home. The Department will continue to work with the USDVA and the California Department of Public Health in the development and evaluation of the home's procedures and staffing plans.
- (4) Sustain the Viability of the Farm and Home Loan Program - Qualified Veterans Mortgage Bond (QVMB):** The Department's Farm and Home Loan Program is facing a difficult challenge in that the current federal law that provides tax-free bonds to fund low-interest loans can only be provided to veterans who were on active duty before 1977. The number of loans processed by the Department has dropped from a high of approximately 4,000 a year to 1,200 as a result of this restriction. The Department is continuing to work with the Governor's DC Office to advance legislation that will lift that and other restrictions on those loans.
- (5) Staff Differentials for Health Care Professionals:** As a result of the Plata Decision in the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, and other changing market conditions, CDVA health care professionals are paid significantly lower salaries than comparable staff in state prisons. As a result, it is becoming difficult for the Department to retain qualified health care professionals for its veterans

homes and to recruit new staff for the five new homes coming on line in the near future. The Department is working with the Department of Personnel Administration (DPA) to establish comparable incentives.

- (6) **Resources and staffing for new Veterans Homes:** The Department will aggressively recruit the highest quality staff for its new veterans homes, and will forecast its budget needs from the General Fund. The Department will seek early certification of the Homes by the USDVA and state regulatory agencies in order to minimize cash flow challenges.
- (7) **Fort Ord California State Veterans Cemetery:** Governor Schwarzenegger signed legislation to establish an endowment fund to support operational costs at the California Central Coast State Veterans' Cemetery in Monterey. The Central Coast community, through the endowment, is responsible for raising sufficient funds to support operational costs. Additional operational funds will come from fees for non-veterans and burial allowances. California will seek a federal grant to fund construction costs. Ultimately the State is responsible to construct and operate the cemetery in perpetuity. The Department will work with the community throughout the endowment fund process, and with the Department of General Services throughout the construction phase of the cemetery.
- (8) **Newer Veterans Services:** California has maintained an historic commitment to caring for veterans and their families, especially for our aging veteran population who need dementia and geriatric long-term care, and that commitment will always be honored. While continuing to honor the past, California will also meet the needs of newer veterans and their families. Critical to an accurate understanding of the veteran community in California, is a well-developed working relationship with Veterans Services Organizations. The Department's relationship with these organizations has been excellent and will continue to thrive. Looking ahead, we will continue to seek similar levels of interaction with California veterans who may not be affiliated with any organized veterans services organizations.

We must meet the special needs of returning combat veterans. Many of the challenges facing the veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq are stressors that have been identified and studied in veterans of previous wars. The Department will use its resources and services to collaborate with other service providers to ensure that returning veterans and their families are informed on issues of health promotion, availability of employment and educational benefits and of health care opportunities, as well as the traditional services we have historically and gratefully provided for our veterans.

- (9) **Homeless Veterans:** Although accurate numbers of homeless veterans are impossible to come by (no one keeps national records on homeless veterans), the USDVA estimates that more than 275,000 veterans are homeless on any given night, and more than a half million experience homelessness over the course of the year. Conservatively, 1 out of every 4 homeless males has put on a uniform and served our country. It is estimated that the USDVA reaches 25% of those in need, leaving many veterans to seek assistance from state and local government agencies and service organizations in their communities.

The challenge for individual state veterans services is evident. On any given night it is estimated that up to 55,000 homeless veterans live on the streets and shelters in California. California has multiple departments and agencies involved in the process of getting homeless veterans off the streets and into life sustaining positions. The process involves medical, alcohol/drug programs, housing, and employment services. Because there are multiple causes of homelessness, there are multiple state agencies, programs, and policies that address the issue. These agencies, programs, and policies intersect with the homeless or potentially homeless at multiple points of service and need. This “continuum of services” reflects the ongoing responsibility of the state to provide policies and programs to prevent or end homelessness, and the Department will continue to work with state departments and agencies, and with service organizations to meet the needs of homeless veterans.

**(10) State Funding of Services to Veterans:** California policymakers have been dealing with large shortfalls in the state’s budget for most of this decade. Recent rebounds in revenue, coupled with various budget savings actions, have led to a narrowing of these shortfalls, although significant imbalances remained as of mid-decade. Still, public policy towards funding services for veterans remains strong. The Department will continue to capitalize on that public policy support by pursuing the following initiatives:

- Strengthening outreach efforts to all veterans
- Promoting education to veterans to assist in obtaining USDVA benefits
- Building new veterans homes
- Improving infrastructure and equipment at the veteran homes
- Removing unnecessary costs from the Farm and Home Loan Program
- Purchasing a state-of-the-art medical software program
- Maintaining a computerized work environment to ensure efficient productivity

**(11) Emergency Preparedness and Planning:** California faces heightened expectations of its citizens that government will quickly and efficiently respond to natural disasters and other catastrophic events to include a possible pandemic that may threaten their health and safety. The Department is working with other state agencies and departments to improve emergency preparedness plans to ensure continuity of operations of government. We must also focus on our employees and their families’ emergency preparedness.

**(12) Women and Minority Veterans:** California has the highest number of women veterans when compared with other states. It also has a significant proportion of minority veterans due to its diverse population. The Department must enhance outreach to these veterans to increase their awareness and access to VA benefits, treatment and services. The challenge to reaching all veterans and their families will require a concerted effort and partnership with the USDVA, other federal and state agencies, Veterans Service Organizations, and the public, to assure that all veterans are aware of their entitlements.

# **CalVet Home Loan Program**

The Department began making low interest rate farm and home loans following the enactment by the California Legislature of the Veterans Farm and Home Purchase Act of 1921. In 1943, the Legislature enacted the Veterans Farm and Home Purchase Act of 1943, which modified the program to meet new needs of veterans. The Veterans Farm and Home Purchase Act of 1974 superseded the 1943 Act and once again modified the program. The 1943 Act established the 1943 Fund in the State Treasury, which is the principal fund utilized by the Program.

Since its inception, the goal of the California Veterans Board and CDVA has been to make Cal-Vet the loan of choice for California veterans. The Program has assisted over 417,000 veterans to purchase farms and homes throughout the State as a benefit to recognize their personal sacrifice and service to state and country. Funds used to finance the purchases are through the sale of Revenue Bonds and Veterans General Obligation Bonds, combined with surplus revenues under the Program not needed at any given time to meet debt service (bond retirement schedules) and operating costs.

Program administration is located in Sacramento (Headquarters), California. The Division maintains six Cal-Vet Offices throughout the State. They are located in Bakersfield, Fresno, Redding, Riverside, Sacramento, and San Diego.

## ***Products and Services***

The Department finances new and existing single-family homes, farms, condominiums and mobile homes on land owned by the veteran or in rental parks by acquiring property selected by the veteran and reselling the property to the veteran under a land sale contract. Under a Contract of Purchase, the veteran holds an equitable interest, and the Department holds legal title to the property. The Department also provides Home Improvement Loans, Construction Loans and Conditional Commitment (Rehabilitation) Loans.

Subsequent loans are available to any veteran who qualifies under the Veterans Code and the Federal Tax Code so long as any previous loan has been paid-in-full or the veteran lost his/her interest in the previous loan through divorce or dissolution of marriage. A veteran must meet qualifications established under State law in the Military and Veterans Code in order to be eligible for the Program. These qualifications are subject to change by the Legislature.

Three types of loan funds are available for the Program:

- “Unrestricted Moneys” (URM), are derived from certain moneys in the 1943 Fund, certain proceeds of pre-Ullman Revenue Bonds and Veterans General Obligation Bonds, and certain future issues of taxable bonds, if any. This source is used to finance loans for Earlier War Veterans, Vietnam Era Veterans, and Recent War Veterans who do not qualify for other funding sources. These funds can only be used to make loans to veterans and ultimately to satisfy outstanding bond debt.

- “Qualified Veterans Mortgage Bond Proceeds” (QVMB), are derived from proceeds of Veterans General Obligation Bonds. This source is used to finance loans for veterans who served on active duty prior to January 1, 1977, who qualify under provisions of the Military and Veterans Code as a “wartime era” veteran, and who were released from active duty less than 30 years from loan application. These funds can only be used to finance loans for eligible Earlier War Veterans and Vietnam Era Veterans whose service meets the time limitations.
- “Qualified Mortgage Bond Proceeds” (QMB), are derived from Revenue Bond proceeds. These funds are used to finance loans for any veteran who qualifies under the Veterans Code (including peace-time veterans) and meets certain requirements (Federal limitations) in regards to family income, purchase price, and previous home ownership.

## **Veterans Services Division**

The Veterans Services Division administers all programs not directly related to Veterans Homes or the Cal-Vet loan program. The division has offices in Sacramento (Headquarters), Oakland, Los Angeles and San Diego, and veteran claims representatives at each of the Veterans Homes of California.

### ***Products and Services***

The division administers or supports several state sponsored benefits for veterans and their families including:

- Veteran Claims – Collaboratively, with County Veterans Service Offices (CVSO), the division provides assistance to veterans and their dependents in preparing and submitting claims and in representing or assisting claimants in dealing with federal, state and local agencies providing veterans benefits.
  - College Tuition Fee Waiver
  - Property Tax Exemptions
  - Disabled Veteran License Plates
  - Free License Plates for certain veterans
  - Fishing and Hunting Licenses
  - Employment and Unemployment Insurance Assistance
  - State Parks and Recreation Pass
  - Business License, Tax and Fee Waivers
- (All benefits subject to eligibility requirements.)

The division administers the following programs:

- Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise Program (DVBE) – State law established a Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise Program in which state agencies have a goal to expend not less than 3% of their annual contracts with DVBE firms. With the establishment of the three percent goal, the Legislature sought to ensure that disabled veteran business owners had an opportunity for full participation in the State’s economy while at the same time fostering increased competition in the marketplace.

- Veterans Cemeteries – The Northern California Veterans Cemetery (NCVC) in Shasta County is the first state-owned and operated veterans cemetery in California. The cemetery serves the veteran population in eighteen Northern California counties and provides sufficient burial space for more than twenty years. Any eligible veteran, along with spouses and eligible dependents, may be interred at the cemetery.
- Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund – The fund provides maintenance of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial supported by donations from the general public.
- California Veterans Memorial Registry – The division supports the California Veterans Memorial Registry by acting as the point-of-contact for veterans to submit individual biographical data for inclusion in the registry.
- California Memorial Registry – State statute requires CDVA to establish and maintain a registry of veteran memorials throughout the State. The registry currently identifies over 400 veterans memorials throughout the State. The registry may be accessed through the Internet at [www.cdva.ca.gov](http://www.cdva.ca.gov).

## **State Veterans Homes Division**

California's Veterans Homes provide California veterans with a living environment that protects their dignity and contributes to their feeling of self-reliance and self-worth. The Department operates the Veterans Homes of California in Yountville, Barstow and Chula Vista. By 2011, California will develop and build new Veterans Homes in Lancaster, Ventura, West Los Angeles, Fresno, and Redding.

The Homes provide affordable health care for residents, and are certified by the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs and licensed by the California Department of Health Services for Acute, Skilled Nursing and/or Intermediate Care (as appropriate), and two are certified by the California Department of Social Services for Residential Care For the Elderly (assisted living). Along with Domiciliary (independent living), the Homes provide five-levels-of-care continuity for residents who can move from one level of care to another when medically necessary.

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, the California State legislature and the voters of California and the California Department of Veteran Affairs (CDVA), in partnership with the United States Department of Veteran Affairs State Homes Construction Grant Program, have made possible new California State Veterans Homes in the Greater Los Angeles/Ventura County (GLAVC) area. The Department's goal in building this new home (one main campus and its two satellite facilities) is to expand existing programs and broaden the range of services offered to veterans living in the GLAVC area.

As conceived, care of the veterans at these new Homes will integrate with the clinical services provided at the USDVA West Los Angeles Medical Center. The new facilities will offer a Continuum of Long Term Care Services that incorporate the care provided by professional staff from West Los Angeles UCLA Geffen School of Medicine and the USC Keck School of Medicine, plus the Greater Los Angeles affiliations for associated health professionals which include UCLA, USC, Western University of Health Sciences, the California State Universities at Northridge and Long Beach, Santa Monica College and Mount Saint Mary's.

Moreover, veterans will be the beneficiaries of the research conducted by principal investigators from the VA Geriatric Research Education and Clinical Center at the USDVA West Los Angeles Medical Center.

The GLAVC Veterans Home is designed to significantly enhance the Department's capability to meet the long-term needs of Veterans in Southern California. Because of the design of the facility and its projected relationship with the USDVA at the Greater Los Angeles Medical Center, and its affiliations with UCLA, USC, California State Universities at Northridge and Long Beach and other institutions of higher learning in the Southern California area, the GLAVC Veterans Home is expected to become a center for education and research in Long -Term Care.

The main campus will be located on the grounds of the USDVA West Los Angeles Medical Center, with two satellite campuses to be built in Ventura and Lancaster. The programs offered at the three campuses form the Continuum of Long Term Care services that will be provided for our deserving California veterans. The West Los Angeles (WLA) Veterans Home will serve a maximum of 396 veterans and the satellites will serve 110 veterans at each of the two sites.

Each of the satellite facilities will be designed with the capability to expand to 400 beds should the demand for services materialize, and each will also contain a licensed Adult Day Health Care Center with a capacity of 50 patients. In addition, the satellite design is expected to serve as the prototype for the future Veterans Homes in Fresno and Redding.

While our goal is to design a state of the art veteran resident friendly environment, we expect that the programs and to some degree the facilities, will change over time as medical science and veteran expectations redefine the state of the art. The initial design will not only anticipate such an atmosphere but will provide the environment to discover and develop the changes.

## ***Products and Services***

### **Continuum of Long Term Care:**

The Continuum of Long Term Care model is designed to meet the health care needs and living requirements of participating veterans at most stages of functional capability and/or physical or psychiatric diseases. This Continuum is expected to support the participating veterans who reside in either their own private residences in Lancaster and Ventura or who reside at the Veterans Home in supervised housing at all three facilities or in a nursing home facility at the WLA facility.

The Continuum includes program support for admitted veterans with dementia and psychiatric conditions, case management arrangements for the veteran's access to acute care services, and may include home health services support to veterans enrolled in day care services. When the actual need arises for acute medical care, eligible veteran residents will receive this at the Greater Los Angeles Health Care System or the VA Clinics in Lancaster and Ventura.

Veterans of the greater Los Angeles area will access the continuum of Long Term Care Services through one of two points of entry: a) The Residential Care Facility located in

West Los Angeles or at either of the satellite facilities; or b) The Adult Day Health Care center at either of the satellite facilities.

As the veteran's functional disability or disease condition progresses or becomes unstable, the veteran's participation in the programs offered at the point of entry may no longer be appropriate. At that stage, the veterans may progress to treatment programs or special care unit services offered at higher levels of care in the Continuum. Once admitted to the Veterans Home the veteran may remain enrolled in this Continuum of Long Term Care Service throughout the natural course of his or her life.

### **Levels of Care Comprising the Continuum of Long Term Care Services:**

**Residential Care Facility (Lancaster, Ventura, and WLA):** The Residential Care Facility for the Elderly (RCFE) is voluntary housing for veterans who need supervised care, access to medical care, socialization, and recreational activities. The RCFE is designed to be one of the points of entry for our veterans to the Continuum of Long Term Care services. The services offered at an RCFE will be designed to enhance veteran safety and provide assistance with every day living activities. Such assistance may include a) help with shopping & banking, b) access to pharmacy and reminders to take daily medications, c) acquisition and preparation of food and, d) transportation to medical and dental services, rehabilitation services and recreational activities. It is our intent to provide RCFE units at all GLAVC campuses.

Veterans who choose to live in the RCFE and whose disease condition has progressed to a terminal stage may do so if the RCFE administration seeks a waiver from the licensing agency. Under this waiver, the veteran with this condition does not have to progress to treatment programs at higher levels of care, but may remain in the RCFE until the end of life with medical assistance provided by a hospice program. Ideally, rooms at all three GLAVC RCFE units will be designated for use by the hospice program, and will be specially designed to accommodate space for healthcare professionals and portable hospital equipment as needed on a case-by-case basis.

**Adult Day Health Care (Lancaster, Ventura):** The Adult Day Health Care (ADHC) program is a therapeutically oriented outpatient day program to provide veterans with the daytime services that are most appropriate to their level of care needs. These services may include medical support and rehabilitation that are typically found in a Skilled Nursing Facility. The goal of the ADHC program is to maintain or to improve the health and functional status of the veteran and to support the caregivers who will continue to provide care and supervision at home. As planned, ADHC programs at the Lancaster and Ventura satellites are expected to care for up to 50 veterans (enrolled), with an anticipated daily attendance of 36 participants.

The ADHC facility will be designed with space to provide periodic physical examinations, monitor medications, offer rehabilitation therapy, psychosocial counseling, dietary services (lunch and snacks) nutrition monitoring, recreation and socialization programs. ADHC programs may assist residents in obtaining home-based assessments, chore services and family counseling. The ADHC staff will also provide or will arrange transportation to and from the facility.



**Skilled Nursing Facility (WLA):** A Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) provides access to inpatient medical evaluations and skilled nursing services, 24 hours per day 7 days of the week. The SNF Units will be designed to include psychiatric services, rehabilitation care, therapeutic activities and emergency medical care. Veterans eligible for this level of care are mentally and physically dependent upon others due to the severity of their functional disability or their disease condition. If the veteran's psychiatric illness can no longer be managed at the SNF they will be transferred to the psychiatric services at the Greater Los Angeles Medical Center until their condition is ameliorated, at which time they will be transferred back to the SNF.

The SNF in the Continuum of Long Term Care Services is designed to accommodate the veteran whether that veteran advances to a need for this level of care from the RCFE Units or the ADHC programs at the satellite facilities or transfers to the SNF from the RCFE at the WLA campus. All SNF capacity will be located at the main WLA Veterans Home.

### **Dementia Care:**

The Continuum of Long Term Care Services is also designed to include programs within each level of care to treat eligible veterans with symptoms or diagnosis of dementia at every stage of this progressive disease. Normally, veteran applicants must be diagnosed with early dementia and have no history of significant behavioral or safety problems to be admitted to programs at the ADHC and RCFE levels of care.

Patients with early dementia will be mainstreamed and treated programmatically in these units. Because of this, consideration will be given to providing tailored perimeter security for all units. Once the dementia progresses to more advanced stages, the veteran will transfer to a higher level of care that is provided in the SNF at the main campus in West Los Angeles. These programs and units will include facility perimeter security, a monitoring system, and specially trained staff.

### **Respite Care:**

With a goal of maximizing independence and promoting successful aging, the Department will support the caregivers of veterans by offering respite care. This service will be offered based upon need and bed availability at each of the new homes. Caregivers who need an occasional break from the daily responsibilities of caring for an aging or disabled veteran in their home may admit, subject to the approval of the Home Administrator, a veteran for overnight care at a Veterans Home. Overnight care can extend for multiple days based upon bed availability, needs of the caregiver(s) and approval of appropriate licensing agencies.

## **Program Goals and Objectives:**

Five strategic Department goals cover multiple objectives related to the successful delivery of programs and services to California's veterans and their families.

Detailed Program and Service Delivery Action Plans and Performance Measures will be developed, tracked and reported by CDVA Division Strategic Plans.

Quarterly, the Department will assess progress toward achieving predetermined goals and objectives, and a Performance Measure Report will be published annually.

**Goal 1: We will provide high quality advocacy and services for all California Veterans.**

**Objectives:**

- A. Extend Cal-Vet QVMB benefits to post 1976 veterans.
- B. Expand outreach activities to veterans, their families and dependents.
- C. Enhance leadership role to advocate for, and provide veterans benefits.
- D. Develop partnerships to enhance relationships with local, state and federal representatives.
- E. Assess customer satisfaction.
- F. Ensure constituent data confidentiality.
- G. Prepare for catastrophic events to minimize disruption of services.

**Goal 2: We will provide the best long-term care and enhanced quality of life for all State Veterans Homes residents.**

**Objectives:**

- A. Provide healthcare services that meet or exceed state and national quality of care indicators.
- B. Add or adjust the services offered based upon the changing demographics, expectations and needs of the veterans, as well as the changing opportunities afforded by medical science and technology.
- C. Support and modernize information technology in health care delivery at State Veterans Homes.
- D. Meet or exceed federal and state survey resident care targets in State Veterans Homes.
- E. Enhance in-service training of Claims Representatives at Veterans Homes.

**Goal 3: We will attract, develop and retain qualified and caring CDVA staff and volunteers.**

**Objectives:**

- A. Enhance in-service training for all staff.
- B. Expand recruitment outreach to healthcare professionals and volunteers.
- C. Strengthen staffs' job skill sets and enhance upward mobility opportunities.
- D. Continue promotion of staff and volunteer recognition and reward system.
- E. Implement standardization of employee Individual Development Plans and Performance Appraisals.
- F. Obtain staff input in assessing workplace environment.

**Goal 4: We will maintain effective communication with all staff and stakeholders.**

**Objectives:**

- A. Continue efforts to collaborate, improve, and coordinate communication with veteran's organizations.
- B. Maximize the use of Intranet as an electronic repository of CDVA documents.

- C. Ensure department-wide distribution of CDVA Policy/Information Memos to educate and inform staff of departmental policies, practices and procedures.
- D. Monitor and increase contact between management and staff.

**Goal 5: We will use our resources wisely.**

**Objectives:**

- A. End each budget year within appropriation levels at each Veterans Home and Headquarters.
- B. Assess and improve business processes and implement efficiencies to reduce operational costs and improve customer service.
- C. Pursue technological innovations to improve distribution of information to staff, veterans and their families, stakeholders and the public at large.
- D. Redesign Farm & Home Loan Services to reflect market place changes and funding challenges.
- E. Maximize use of assets and funding sources available to the department from private and public sectors.
- F. Specify data and metrics required to monitor and report program and service performance.
- G. Establish ongoing strategic planning policies and procedures.